

MORE DENTISTS CHOOSING TO BUILD

'Green' Offices

In the summer of 2008, John Boice owner of Boice Engineering and Development Inc., based in Southern California, was paying \$5.00 a gallon for gas on each of the 15 vehicles in his company's fleet. He says that was his wake-up-call. Mr. Boice was going to do whatever it took to go "green" in his business and offer his clients the option of building entirely "green" offices.

Mr. Boice has designed and constructed several dental offices during his 15 years in business, and he says he has found that once he began offering the "green" building option, dentists were very interested in pursuing it. "Many dentists have heard of eco-friendly, but they don't know much about the LEED program, which stands for Leadership in Energy Environmental Design (LEED). That is the national benchmark for the design, construction, and operations of high-performance green buildings. " He notes that most dentists

don't realize how much they can do in designing a new office that is environmentally friendly and energy efficient. "But once we start talking about it and they understand how easily they can incorporate it into the design of their offices, they are very interested in pursuing it," notes Mr. Boice.

When helping a dentist establish a green office, this developer seeks to answer a few specific questions, beginning with location. Is the doctor considering space close to public transportation? Will there be a long-term lease agreement in which the doctor can stay in this particular office for a minimum of 10 years? Is there onsite recycling or is there enough storage to hold materials until they can be collected for recycling? And is there an area in the new office where the doctor can establish his/her own recycling system? In addition, Mr. Boice works with various vendors to help doctors establish paperless offices, incorporate digital X-ray systems, purchase recycled

furniture and cabinetry, and the list goes on.

In building “green” practices, Mr. Boice says that his company uses low viscosity paints, all waste is recycled, and nothing goes to the landfill. Recycled and renewable products are incorporated into the building wherever they can be, including in the flooring and cabinetry. Energy efficient and natural lighting is used throughout the office as well as energy efficient HVAC systems, the computers have Energy Star ratings, and the restrooms are equipped with low-flow toilets.

Dr. Kendalyn Lutz-Craver, a 2003 graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Dentistry, built her first practice in 2007 in rural North Carolina. She was intent on ensuring that her new building would be LEED certified. “Once you have the design, you sit down with the architects and engineers and go through the checklist and you can be certified as silver, gold, or platinum. You go through the list and figure out what makes sense, what is doable, what is cost effective, and what’s going to give you the best return on your investment in your facility. It’s much easier to build a LEED certified practice today because that is the trend in building,” explains Dr. Lutz-Craver.

In addition to LEED certification, dentists can also pursue GreenDOC Dental Office Certification through

million lead foils, 28 million liters of toxic X-ray fixer, 3.4 tons of mercury waste, 1.7 billion sterilization pouches, and 680 million chair barriers, light handle covers, and patient bibs. The green dentistry approach to practice reduces waste and pollution. Saves water, energy, and money, and incorporates high tech equipment.

For Dr. Bridget Walsh, a 2003 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine, when she and her sister, Dr. Megan Azar, a 2002 graduate of Temple University’s School of Dentistry, decided they were going to open their first practice, they knew they wanted to create an environmentally friendly practice.

“The summer before we moved into our new office, there were all these articles on the water quality in our community, (Clarks Summit, PA) and the concerns with all these emerging chemicals. We just felt we had a responsibility to consider our impact on the environment when we were setting up our office and in how we planned to practice. We used a natural linseed linoleum, which is known as Marmoleum. In the carpeted areas we used low VOC (volatile organic compounds) carpet that is recyclable. We used a no VOC paint and energy efficient lighting. Most of our paper products are post consumer recycled. We’ve tried to use preferred purchasing and consider the packaging when we order products as well as the timing. We place our supply orders only once a month so that everything comes together at one time. We’ve reduced the harmful chemicals that we use to clean and found effective alternatives for those. We also went with digital X-rays and digital charts.” She urges dentists to talk to their suppliers about product options. “When your reps know that green dentistry and eco-friendly practices are a priority for you, they will recommend products that have less impact on the environment,” explains Dr. Walsh.

Steven Koos is an MD and DDS who specializes in oral and maxillofacial surgery in Chicago. His office, ORA Oral Surgery & Implant Studio, is the first completely green oral surgery practice in the nation. “We carefully planned the construction of a green building on a sustainable site. We are members of the United States Green Building Council, and we built our practice in accordance with LEED. We utilized all green interior design finishes and textiles that are free of PBTs, which are persistent bio-accumulated toxins and VOCs. Many of the materials are made from post-industrial and post consumer waste. We also employ green business practices, which includes paperless charting, environmentally conscious purchasing, electronic claims, electronic reminders, and electronic recall.”



RECEPTION AREA IN DR. LUTZ-CRAVER'S LEED CERTIFIED DENTAL OFFICE

the Eco-Dentistry Association (www.ecodentistry.org). The program provides standards for green dental offices, best practices, product recommendations, action plans to help establish green practices over time, as well as other services.

Susan Beck is director of the Eco-Dentistry Association. She explains that the organization was established to provide dental professionals with continuing education, practical tips, product suggestions, and standards for going green. According to the association, each year dental practices generate 4.8

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Laboratories *continued from page 24*

Regulation of Laboratories/Technicians

You may be stunned to learn that not a single state in the U.S. requires dental lab technicians to be licensed. If you're surprised, you're in good company. A July 2009 American Dental Association survey of its members revealed that more than one third of dentists responding believe that dental technicians and laboratories are regulated or licensed.

In actuality, only four states mandate any baseline technical competency for technicians. Those states are Florida, South Carolina, Kentucky, and Texas. In these states, the baseline competency or continuing education requirements are based on the Certified Dental Technician (CDT) designation administered by the National Board for Certification in Dental Laboratory Technology. This is the only recognized certifying body for dental technicians by the ADA.

Further, dentists can seek out laboratories that also have achieved and maintain certification/accreditation as either a Certified Dental Laboratory or DAMAS laboratory. These facility standards focus on health and safety/business operations and compliance with quality system/good manufacturing practices for laboratories based on OSHA and FDA requirements.

Efforts are underway in several states to seek similar regulations in state dental practice acts. It is believed that a baseline requirement for registration of laboratories and a tie to certification standards for technicians is imperative for dentists. This will preserve a consistent foundation of technical training regardless of what laboratory you choose to work with. This is even more important today as new dentists generally are not receiving comprehensive training in dental laboratory technology outside of continuing education opportunities.

Growth Opportunities

The current U.S. economy aside, the long term upside of dentistry is strong.

According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the demand for dental services is significantly increasing in the United States, to the tune of \$167 billion by 2015. While this demand is present, the number of dentists per 100,000 citizens is decreasing and 20% of the current U.S. dental technician workforce is predicted to retire or leave the profession for other reasons by 2014, based on statistics available from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Having a trusted technician and laboratory to work with will not only help you meet demand but also grow your practice.

For more information on the laboratory industry and seeking out a qualified partner, visit the following websites: www.nadl.org, www.nbccert.org, www.dentallabfoundation.org. **tND**

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Dr. Koos notes that his practice also practices green health care, sustainable health care, and eco-friendly dentistry. "We are the first dental office to produce zero bio-hazardous waste. Typically, companies are hired to haul that waste off and then it is incinerated and all those products' harmful chemicals and toxins are released into the air. We process our bio-hazardous waste on site using a system called the Demolizer II. It renders the waste safe for disposal through the regular garbage. I would hope this is something that would be commonly used in any patient facility."

Many dentists new to practice and those already established are very concerned about the environment and reducing waste. They are taking numerous steps in their own homes and when they realize what they can do in the design of their practices, they are very interested in going green. "This isn't a fad. It is a necessary movement. The medical community has embraced this and it only makes sense that dental community follow suit," emphasizes Dr. Koos.

Interested in learning more about going green and the LEED® Green Building System™? Visit the U.S. Green Building Council's Web site at www.usgbc.org. If you're considering building in the Southern California area and would like to know more about building "green" contact Boice Engineering and Development Inc. (951) 898-5850. And for more information on the Eco-Dentistry Association visit www.ecodentistry.org or call 510-841-1229. **tND**

Background Check

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Background checks may also protect the safety of your workplace from the threat of harm by those who may be a danger to themselves or others. An individual's history of convictions for theft, violent crimes, or the possession of controlled substances are all factors to consider when determining whether a prospective employee should be hired.

There are numerous methods of performing background checks, including obtaining credit reports, performing criminal background checks, obtaining education and driving records, checking public records and obtaining information regarding an individual's past employment experiences. Depending on the circumstances, visiting various social networking sites or performing "Google" searches may also provide insight into a prospective applicant's background. Obtaining proper consent